

Health Talents International
Mobile Medical Trip to Chichicastenango, Guatemala
November 4-9, 2009

Trip Participants: MD/DO: Barbara Slee, Lesca Hadley, Michael Herndon; DDS: James Haller, Robert Lamb, Brandon Burger, David Batres; Pharmacist: Dave Ellis, Gaymarie Williamson; Dental Assistant: Barbara Haller, Jon Nickerson, Donna Lamb; Internal Medicine: Kristina Buchholz; Translator: JoLee Thayer, Amber Brown, Mary Patterson; Nurse: Ashley Anderson, Jala Verner; Compassionate care givers: Mike Duncan, Alan Towler, Cheryl Crissup, David Morton, Robert Morton, Misty Herndon, Christopher Verner; Trip Chaplain: Adam Herndon; HTI Team Leader: Julie Wheatley

This trip started off nicely. Everyone made it onto the plane in Houston and through customs in Guatemala without any problems. We met Mary and Amber at the airport in Guatemala because they had already been in the country studying Spanish. Kimmel, Lisa, Danny, Manuel and Tomas were also there to meet the group and help us get loaded into the pickup trucks. We had a little delay when one of the car keys went missing so we made use of the time to chow down on some Pollo Campero.

We arrived at the Hotel Santo Tomas in the early evening and unloaded our bags into our rooms before getting together for dinner. After dinner we had some devotional time along with a little orientation time. Kimmel and Lisa talked about what villages we would be going to and introduced our Guatemalan coworkers. We wrapped up the night with a prayer and said goodnight.

Thursday morning we had an early breakfast and headed out to the villages for a day of seeing patients in three villages, Panajxit, Xatinab and at Clinica Caris. At all three clinics we saw 56 medical and 81 dental patients. It was a nice first day but it rained all day long! The rain didn't hinder us on Thursday but we were worried about the roads to the Friday clinics if the rain kept up, which it did!

Once we were all back at the Hotel on Thursday evening we were happy to be warm and dry and enjoying dinner together. Adam Herndon gave our first full devotional and led us in lots of singing. This was a big singing group! The Herndon's have their own singing group and we were lucky enough to have three Herndon's and two of their spouses along with us! Adam did a wonderful job with the devotional thoughts all throughout the week. He reminded us to focus on what God is doing in our lives and what he is trying to teach us each day. The devotional times were a great way to end up every day and a special time for the group to bond. We were so blessed to have Adam along with us to help us re-center at the end of the day and be spiritually ready for the following day. His way of gently encouraging and reminding us to think deeper and do some soul searching was a blessing to all.

Friday came along and we headed out to Xepocol and Paxot 2. The roads were sufficiently wet and muddy since the unseasonal rain continued to pour. The group in Xepocol saw 23 medical and 45 dental. They slipped and slid up the roads but made it to clinic safely. On the way back to Chichi the minivan left early to go the long, less muddy way back instead of risking slipping a little TOO much on the muddy roads on the way back down. The Paxot 2 group saw 28 medical and 40 dental patients and had a lovely day with the very involved Paxot 2 congregation. The team was impressed with the ladies

of the church who spend a good portion of the day preparing food for the group in the kitchen adjacent to the church building. All the team members were impressed with the participation and activity in Paxot 2 throughout the day.

Friday night was a chilly night and we had the hotel all to ourselves so we circled up in the dining hall around the fire place and had our devotional time. It was nice having the whole place to ourselves and being able to sing in the large dining area! Julie and Robert shared with the group about some of the special things about Health Talents that the new team members didn't know. They talked about the scholarship program and were able to celebrate with Aura on the completion of her first year of dental school and hope with Mauri that she would be able to study business administration through a Sherman scholarship. There was also an extremely special moment shared by all when both Dave Ellis and Robert Lamb talked about Marcos Lux and what a special addition he has been to the HTI team. They shared with the group that Marcos was a scholarship student with us and talked about what a good person and a good dentist he is. By the time Dave and Robert had finished Marcos, Robert and most of the group were in tears. Marcos then shared with the group about what an impact HTI has had on his life and about his appreciation for the opportunities he has had and the relationships he has made through HTI. It was a touching night!

Saturday morning the parrots were out in the courtyard by the time we were done having breakfast and were serenading us as we headed out to Mactzul 1 and Chuchipaca. This was the last day of clinic and everyone was still ready to work and excited to be heading out for a new day of patients! In Chuchipaca the first patient of the day wound up being one of our own when Dave Morton ran into a door frame! As many of you know the Guatemalans are short people and thus their doorways are short as well. It's a hazard to a man over six feet tall! Dave just didn't crouch enough when headed into the dental area and got the top of his head pretty good. Thankfully Robert Lamb came to the rescue and stitched him up right then and there. Dave was very careful to be sure his head stayed clear of all door frames and ceiling beams from then on! After Dave was sutured up the dental team saw 40 patients and the medical team saw 28. In Mactzul 1 the dental team stayed busy with 65 patients, Dr. Haller and Marcos made a great teeth pulling team! There were also 21 medical patients so the doctors were happy to treat patients and enjoy the afternoon in the village.

Saturday night we sang for quite some time and went around sharing about our week since it was our last official devotional time together. Adam helped lead the conversation and did a great job of asking questions and getting people to share. We were once again grateful for him and the role of the chaplain on a trip such as this.

Sunday morning we all met in the "upper room" for a time of worship and a message from Adam. We shared in communion time together and thanked God in prayer for the success of the clinic week and for the safety of the team. The sun was finally shining when we headed out to the market and to tour Chichi. The team spent a beautiful morning in the market, met back up at the hotel after lunch and headed back to Guatemala City.

Sunday evening we shared a great buffet dinner with the team and some special guests. David Batres, a dentist from Guatemala who worked with us all week brought his family to dinner. Everyone was excited to meet David's family and see his beautiful children. Carlos and Silvia were also able to join the group and see their old friends. One of the other special treats that evening was that the group got to meet Fernando, Alex and Diana's new baby boy. He is absolutely darling and looks just like his brother Adrian!

After dinner everyone said their goodbyes and headed off to bed. The team made it to the airport and home without any troubles. We had a blessed week!

Trip report by: Julie Wheatley